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Certification of State Register Listing

The Register of Historic Kansas Places includes all Kansas properties nominated to the National Register as well as lower threshold properties which are listed on the state register only.

Property Name: Lawrence Union Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot

Address: North Second Street at Maple and Locust Streets, Lawrence, Kansas 66044

County: Douglas County

Legal: NW 1/4, NE 1/4, NE 1/4, SW 1/4, S30, T12S, R20E in North Lawrence, Blk 2.
A 10 foot perimeter extends from the building to form the nominated parcel.

Owner: Mike Wildgen, City of Lawrence

Address: P.O. Box 708, Lawrence, Kansas 66044

National Register eligible _____

State Register eligible X

This property was approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for the Register of Historic Kansas Places on August 22, 1992.

I hereby certify that this property is listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Ramon P. ...
State Historic Preservation Officer

Date Aug. 28, 1992

The Lawrence Union Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot (c. 1888-1889) is being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places for its historical association with the growth and development of Lawrence, Kansas and for its architectural significance as an example of the picturesque depot architecture constructed by the Union Pacific Railroad in the 1880s. The brick and stone depot stands as the Union Pacific Railroad's second depot in Lawrence, and was designed by the Kansas City architectural firm of Van Brunt and Howe. Wolfe and Snow are credited with the construction.

The Union Pacific Railroad was incorporated as the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad by the legislature of the Territory of Kansas in 1855, although construction on the line did not begin until 1863. The charter was acquired by John Fremont and Samuel Hallett. During the eight years that followed its incorporation, the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad Company organized and sought purchasers for its securities. The legislature of the Territory of Kansas had granted fifty-one charters to railroad companies by 1861, but only one company had laid any track. The companies were largely designed to help promote settlement.

The Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 revitalized construction interest among the various companies which had received charters. Under the terms of this act, the Union Pacific Railroad was chartered to build westward from the 100th meridian in the territory of Nebraska to the west boundary of the territory of Nevada while the Central Pacific Railway, an existing California corporation, was to build eastward from the Pacific coast. The Pacific Railroad Act of 1864 amended the charter, restricting the Central Pacific Railway from extending more than 150 miles into Nevada.

In 1864, the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad was renamed the Union Pacific Railway Company Eastern Division. The company changed its name again in 1869 to the Kansas Pacific Railway Company, the line reached Denver in 1870. From Denver, the Kansas Pacific Railway built to Cheyenne, Wyoming over a subsidiary road, the Denver Pacific Railway. The main line of the Union Pacific Railway and the Central Pacific Railway met at Promontory, Utah in May, 1869.

After a five year battle to gain control of the Kansas Pacific Railway, Jay Gould acquired the railroad in 1879. Gould combined the Kansas Pacific Railway with the Union Pacific Railway and the Denver Pacific Railway to form the Union Pacific Railway in 1880. The company went into receivership in 1893, and was reorganized into the present Union Pacific Railroad Company in 1898.

The Union Pacific Railroad reached Lawrence in 1864. A one-story, board and batten, depot was constructed by the railroad, and served the community until the completion of the second and present depot in 1889. The depot was allowed to deteriorate, and upon the 1888 visit of the Union Pacific Railroad president Charles F. Adams (1835-1915) to Lawrence, the railroad decided to replace the aging frame structure. Adams became president of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1884, and during his fourteen year command commissioned his longtime friend Henry Van Brunt to design many structures for the railroad, including the new Lawrence passenger and freight depots.

Henry Van Brunt (1832-1903) and Frank M. Howe (1849-1909) established their Kansas City practice in 1884, and for the next twenty years enjoyed a very active residential design business, with a sprinkling of important civic and commercial commissions interspersed. The

two architects had practiced together in Boston, with Ware and Van Brunt and later as Van Brunt and Howe. Both firms received many important civic and commercial commissions in the Boston area. The firm's move to Kansas City was precipitated by the poor building climate experienced in the Boston area during the 1870s and by the extensive building boom experienced by the western states in the 1880s. Van Brunt and Howe are generally acknowledged as introducing the Richardsonian Romanesque to the Kansas City area.

Van Brunt and Howe designed the three most important stations along the Union Pacific Railroad's main line: Omaha, Nebraska (c. 1899), Cheyenne Wells, Colorado (c. 1893), and Ogden, Utah (c. 1886-1887). The firm also designed smaller stations such as the two found in Kansas: Lawrence (c. 1888-1889) and Junction City (c. 1890). Other Union Pacific Railroad depot commissions for this period include Valley, Nebraska (c. 1890), Portland, Oregon (c. 1893), Logan, Utah (c. 1898), Sioux City, Iowa (c. 1890?), and Denison, Texas (c. 1890?).

"The stations at Lawrence, Junction City, Valley, Cheyenne Wells, and Logan were all one and a half story placed at the side of through tracks. The standard plan for these stations provided a central ticket office with a station master's oriel window at the track side and waiting and baggage rooms. At the largest station in this group, located in Lawrence, separate men's and women's waiting rooms were provided." (Hennessey, pp. 207-8, 1979)

"Stylistically Van Brunt's line stations were generally designed in a modified Richardsonian mode. Gambrel roofs, short cupolas, timbered or panelled walls, and rock-faced masonry construction are tempered by Queen Anne details to give the stations a rather domestic feeling..." (Hennessey, p. 209, 1979)

The design for the Lawrence depot employs the rusticated and polychrome facings of the Richardsonian idiom, but it is not Romanesque. The building is rectangular with asymmetrical massing, there are no arches or curves integrated into its form. The street-side, half-timbered gable and the seventy-five foot spire which rose to the west of the gable, gave the building its picturesque, romantic character, evoking images of a quiet English village.

Van Brunt first used the spire in the design for the Union Pacific Railroad depot at Worcester, Massachusetts (1873-1875). The Worcester station is Van Brunt's most widely known depot design, the antecedents for the spire lying clearly in English sources.

The Lawrence depot was built of Junction City limestone, with pressed red brick and Colorado red stone trim. An awning supported by cast iron columns projected from the depot's western end. Slate shingles covered the cross gabled, hipped roof of the main building, the awning's roof, and the spire. A brick platform ran the length of the depot on the north elevation. The depot's overall dimension measured 153'x 30'.

The building's two waiting rooms were finished with California red wood, light colored woods were selected for the furniture.

Two significant changes to the building occurred in 1903 and c. 1930 respectively. The 1903 Kansas River flood damaged the awning, it was removed. A 1928 fire in the baggage room resulted in little damage to the building. The spire and the slate roof were removed in the 1930s, the existing roof configuration and asbestos shingles date from this period.

In 1944 the depot was remodelled under the supervision of William Thomas Wellman, general architect for the Union Pacific Railroad. During this transformation, the ticket office was moved to the west end of the building, the waiting rooms were combined, the wooden floors replaced with concrete and "Tile-Tex", the red wood interior finishes were replaced with walnut finishes, acoustic tile ceiling was installed, the brick platform was replaced with concrete, and the sliding doors on the baggage and express rooms were replaced with overhead garage doors.

The Union Pacific Railroad discontinued passenger service at the Lawrence depot in 1971, but used the building for a freight depot until 1984. Since that time, the Save the Depot Task Force persevered in its fight to preserve the structure.

In 1991, the Union Pacific Railroad deeded the depot to the City of Lawrence. With ownership of the building in hand, plans to rehabilitate the building were developed. At this writing, the exterior has been stabilized and plans for various fund raising efforts and grant proposals to fund the remaining exterior and interior work, as well as landscaping and other development, are active. The preservation of the Lawrence Union Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot is very much a community driven and community supported effort.

The rehabilitation plans for the depot address the two major exterior losses, the destruction and subsequent demolition of the awning in 1903 and the dismantling of the spire in the 1930s. Both features will be reconstructed. The losses to the interior will not be addressed.

The Lawrence Union Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot maintains a moderate degree of architectural integrity, its exterior losses can be classified as additive features, while its interior losses are more profound. However, the significance of the depot as an extant example of a rapidly vanishing architectural type overrides the integrity issues.

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